

September 28, 2017

**Dear Parents and Guardians:**

Sight words are a list of 220 words that are used so often in print that together they make up an estimated 75% of all words used in books. Some of the words cannot be decoded using conventional strategies so memorizing them until they are known by sight is beneficial.

You might think that these words are so common that kids would just learn them organically through reading and other everyday print. But many of the words also defy standard phonetic conventions, meaning they are impossible to sound out. They are often also difficult to illustrate, so children can't use illustrations in picture books to make a deeper connection to these words. Can you illustrate "is" or "it?" Me neither.

The best thing about these words being so common is that children learn them *easily* with repetition because they are usually words that they already have in their everyday vocabulary.

Working hard to learn these words by sight (memorizing) pays off. It allows kids to free up cognitive resources so they can focus on the tougher words that require strong decoding skills. They are also able to understand most of the text if those decoding skills fail. There is more to why sight words are important than just simply the mechanics of reading; they are also fantastic confidence boosters.

One of my educational philosophies is to build children's confidence up and then present an attainable challenge. Sight-word knowledge provides a scaffold of understanding and confidence for new readers who need to use all the other tools in their tool box to complete the job at hand: reading with understanding.

So now that we know what they are, why they are important, and what they can do, we need your child to learn them! On my website, you can find flashcards with these words on them. This is a great way to get your nightly reading in!

Once your child has mastered a list and knows all the words by sight, let me know and I will test them. If they have mastered the list they will get to write their name on the WALL OF FAME for that list! I am so excited! Please see the attached page for some activities you can do with your Rock Star!

I am looking forward to celebrating their accomplishments,

Mrs. Egan

**There are six lists, please introduce them to your child in order:**

**Pre-Primer**

**Primer**

**First**

**Second**

**Third**

**Nouns**

Here are some fun activities you can try at home.

### **1. Sight Word Hide & Seek**

Write sight words on index cards, and hide them around the house. Set the timer and give your child two minutes to find as many sight words as he can. At the end of the two minutes, have him read the list to you. He gets one point for every correct word. Repeat, challenging him to break his own record.

### **2. Sight Word Memory**

Using index cards, write out pairs of sight words and place them face down on a table. Take turns flipping over the cards and reading the words. If you make a match, you keep the cards. The person with the most cards when they are all turned over wins.

### **3. Meal Time Word Wall**

Make a word wall with a large piece of butcher paper. Start with two words, adding a new one daily. Have your child read the whole list every mealtime. If she has trouble with the list, do not add more words until she can read them without trouble.

This letter is a summary of the following article:

What is this list of words, and why does your child need to learn them?

**Scholastic Parents: Raise a Reader**

By Allison McDonald

on May 29, 2014